

CLAIMS

1. A system for operating a dental chair (1) connected to a computer (2),
 - comprising actuating elements and/or status indicators (3) disposed on the dental chair (1),
 - and comprising a computer interface (5, 6), via which information (4) is transmitted in the form of function codes from the dental chair (1) to the computer (2) by way of the actuating elements and/or status indicators (3),
 - and comprising a storage area (7) in the computer (2), in which actions assigned to one or more function codes are stored,

characterized in that

 - software is installed on the computer (2) which is capable of managing these function codes and by means of which the action assigned to the function codes in a saved configuration file (7) in the storage area is initiated, *ie* a PC application is opened or closed or an operation is carried out in a running PC application,
 - and that the assignment of function codes associated with the actuating elements and/or status indicators (3) on the dental chair (1) to certain actions can be configured by modifying the configuration file (7) for the software.
2. A system as defined in claim 1, characterized in that the software exhibits a dialog box by means of which the user can allocate function codes issuing from the actuating elements and/or status indicators (3) on the dental chair (1) to certain PC actions.
3. A system as defined in claim 1 or claim 2, characterized in that the assignment of the actuating element (3) depends on the currently active PC application, and/or that the actuating element (3) concerned has different action assignments for different PC applications.
4. A system as defined in any one of claims 1 to 3, characterized in that information (11) concerning the assignment of the actuating element (3) can be transmitted from the computer (2) to the dental chair (1) via the computer interface (5, 6) and

is made perceptible on the control panel (12).

5. A method of controlling a dental chair connected to a computer, comprising the steps of

- 5 - actuating an actuating element disposed on the dental chair, and/or activating a status indicator and generating information thereon, at the dental chair,
- transmitting the information in the form of one or more function codes from the dental chair to the computer,
- 10 - comparing the information in the form of one or more function codes with a configuration file in a storage area in the computer and
- carrying out the action assigned to certain information stored in a configuration file,

characterized in that

- 15 - the comparison of the information is taken over by software managing said assignment and independent of the PC applications used, by means of which the action is carried out, *ie* opening or closing of a PC application and/or execution of an operation in a running PC application, and that
- 20 - the assignment of function codes of the actuating elements and/or status indicators on the dental chair to the action is specified and is configured by modifying the configuration file.

6. A method as defined in claim 4, characterized in that the user of the software specifies the assignment of function codes issuing from the actuating elements and/or status indicators (3) on the dental chair (1) to the certain PC actions in a dialog box.

7. A method as defined in claim 5 or claim 6, characterized in that the software provides means for storing a number of different configurations.

8. A method as defined in any one or more of claims 5 to 7, characterized in that the assignment of the actuating element is dependent on the currently active PC application.

9. A method as defined in any one or more of claims 5 to 8, characterized in that in different PC applications different actions are assigned to the actuating element concerned.
- 5 10. A method as defined in any one or more of claims 5 to 9, characterized in that the assignments are displayed on the control panel of the dental chair.
- 10 11. A method as defined in any one or more of claims 5 to 10, characterized in that the PC context that is returned via the computer interface is indicated on the control panel (12), or an application-specified control panel (12) is displayed.